



DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS
Veterans Health Administration
Washington DC 20420

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Date:

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In Reply Refer To: 121

OFFICE OF RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT INFORMATION LETTER

**SOLICITATION OF APPLICATIONS FOR THE
BIOMEDICAL LABORATORY RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT SERVICE (BLR&D)
AND CLINICAL SCIENCE RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT SERVICE (CSR&D)
RESEARCH CENTERS**

1. Introduction. This Veterans Health Administration (VHA) Biomedical Laboratory Research and Development Service (BLR&D)/Clinical Science Research and Development Service (CSR&D) Information Letter announces the opportunity for investigators from Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) Medical Centers to compete for Research Centers in the areas of Serious Mental Illness, Addictive Disorders, HIV/AIDS (including HIV/HCV co-infections), and Environmental Hazards. While these are disparate research areas, they represent areas of currently funded Research Centers that are eligible for recompetition. This is also an opportunity for new center-based research applications in these areas.

2. Purpose. BLR&D/CSR&D Center awards are intended to support groups of VA investigators in programs of exceptional quality to enhance the preclinical, translational and/or clinical knowledge specifically in research areas long considered important to and prevalent in veterans. Center-based research should lay the foundation for translation of pre-clinical knowledge to clinical applications, and synergistically provide more from collaborative efforts, especially at the translational level, than scientists working independently. Center research should lead to advances that will ultimately improve the healthcare of veterans.

3. Goals of Centers. Centers are expected to promote new, innovative research and foster new research collaborations in a well-focused area of interest, thereby creating an environment for research pursuits that would not otherwise be available. Centers are expected to actively engage in training new VA biomedical and clinical investigators, particularly clinician investigators entering their research careers, who will be encouraged in their development as leading VA scientists in the Center's area of focus.

To accomplish these goals, Center funds may be used to support Core Facilities and Pilot Projects that encourage new innovative and collaborative research

among investigators within the Center. To advance the training mission of fostering the next generation of VA investigators, Center funds may be used to support trainees using the Associate Investigator or first level Career Development program mechanisms. Centers may also use other mechanisms to support trainees.

For a detailed description of expectations from Research Centers, refer to the Guidance Document, Section VI, which can be downloaded from the "Resources for Researchers" section of the following web page:
<http://www.va.gov/resdev/programs/blrd-csrd>.

4. Research Scope and Focus. The research scope may be preclinical, translational and/or clinical, and should be highly focused on an area of interest to this solicitation. Within these areas of interest, appropriate research topics include, but are not limited to:

a. Serious Mental Illness: identifying the causes of serious mental illness, such as Schizophrenia, pertinent to our veteran population; studies of potential therapeutic targets; pharmacological or behavioral treatment studies to reduce symptoms and increase function. Note that pilot projects may be supported by Center funds; however, full-scale clinical trials should be supported by other mechanisms such as VA Merit Review.

b. Addictive Disorders: experimental approaches to identify brain targets for addiction; prevention of substance seeking behavior; pre-clinical and/or clinical studies of co-morbidities; advances in treatment for addictive disorders.

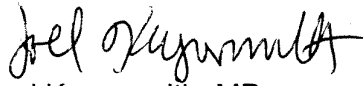
c. HIV /AIDS, including HIV-HCV Coinfection: identification of new therapeutic targets, new treatment options, role of host and viral factors in pathogenesis, promising vaccine candidates and immunological modifiers.

d. Environmental hazards: physiological, neurological and behavioral effects of environmental toxins specifically as related to the exposures known to have occurred in military operations; potential treatment studies for toxic exposures related to healthcare needs of veterans.

5. Application Process. An electronic intent to submit notification is required prior to submitting an application. For information on program requirements, intent to submit instructions, submission deadlines, and application submission, and center expectations, applicants should refer to the Guidance Document, which can be downloaded from the "Resources for Researchers" section of the following web page: <http://www.va.gov/resdev/programs/blrd-csrd>

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6. Inquiries. Inquiries regarding Research Centers on Serious Mental Illness and Addictive Disorders may be directed to Terri Gleason, PhD, at (202) 254-0498 and inquiries on HIV/AIDS and Environmental Hazards Centers may be directed to Suma Muralidhar, PhD, at (202) 254-0275.



Joel Kupersmith, MD
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Attachments

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